

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0011
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 2285

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS CCCI PINT, PINS, JM
SUBJECT: PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION CHAIRMAN SUSPENDED

REFERENCE: A. 77 KINGSTON 6915 B. 76 KINGSTON 3666

1. THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 1 THAT IT HAS "SUSPENDED" THE CHAIRMAN OF ITS YOUTH ORGANIZATION (PNPYO), PAUL BURKE, FROM HIS OFFICE AND "ANY OTHER RESPONSIBLE POSITION HELD BY HIM WITHIN THE PARTY, FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR." HIS CONDUCT WILL BE REVIEWED AT THE END OF THE YEAR TO DETERMINE WHETHER HE IS "SUITABLE TO OCCUPY RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS WITHIN THE PARTY." THE CAUSE OF BURKE'S SUSPENSION WAS THE STATEMENT ISSUED OVER HIS SIGNATURE LAST NOVEMBER DEFENDING ONE OF JAMAICA'S MOST DANGEROUS CRIMINALS (REF (A)). THAT ACTION BY THE PNPYO CHAIRMAN WAS IMMEDIATELY CONDEMNED BY THE PNP NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHICH SAID THAT BURKE'S BEHAVIOR WOULD BE REFERRED TO THE PARTY'S DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE.

2. COMMENT: THIS IS SIMPLY THE LATEST CHAPTER IN THE
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PNP'S ONGOING EFFORTS TO EXERCISE SOME RESTRAINT OVER ITS BOISTEROUS YOUTH FRONT. EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE "SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY" THE PNPYO'S THEN-CHAIRMAN, LUIS CASTRIOTA, FOR INDISCIPLINE (SEE REF (B)) AND LAST SEPTEMBER, THE PNPYO WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE DISTURBANCES AT THE PNP'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE WHICH LED TO THE DECISION TO DEFER ELECTION

OF THE PARTY'S FOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS UNTIL THE SPECIAL "RESUMED"SESSION, DUE TO BE HELD HIS WEEKEND. THE DECISION TO ANNOUNCE BURKE'S SUSPENSION AT THIS TIME IS CLEARLY A WARNING TO THE PNPYO NOT TO ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE "RESUMED"CONFERENCE. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT THERE WILL BE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD FOR THIS TO HAPPEN. THE ELECTION OF THE PARTY'S FOUR VICE-PRESIDENTS HAS BEEN FURTHER DEFERRED (SEE KINGSTON 2098 AND 2099), AND THIS REMOVES THE ISSUE WHICH AROUSED THE YO DELEGATES LAST SEPTEMBER. THE PUBLIC IS BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE SESSIONS, AND THIS OBVIATES THE DANGER OF CLAQUES AND GOON SQUADS BEING ON HAND. DAVID COORE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE FINANCE MINISTRY, AND THIS OFFERS THE PNP'S "RADICAL" FACTION -- WHICH WHOM THE YO HAS VERY CLOSE LINKS -- A SCALP. HOWEVER, THE PNPYO IS UNPREDICTABLE, AND QUITE LIKELY TO ADOPT POSITIONS EVEN MORE EXTREME THAN THOSE ADVOCATED BY THE "RADICALS" (SEE 77 KINGSTON 5527). THUS, IT MAY HAVE BEEN DEEMED WISE TO ANNOUNCE BURKE'S SUSPENSION NOW.

3. THE PNPYO IS IRREPRESSIBLE. AS AN INDICATOR OF ITS CHARACERISTIC PUGNACITY, BURKE REPLIED TO THE NEWS OF HIS SUSPENSION BY NOTING THAT THE STATEMENT FOR WHICH HE WAS BEING DISCIPLINED HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE OF THE YOUTH FRONT, AND THUS ALL OF ITS MEMBERS OUGHT TO BE DISCIPLINED.
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